

Child and Young Adult 1998 Data Release

The 1998 NLSY79 Child and Young Adult data, collected from NLSY79 mothers and their children, will soon be released on CD-ROM. This cohort includes two age groupings based on the age of each child on December 31 of the survey's calendar year.

Children ages 14 and under as of that date are part of the NLSY79 child group, while those ages 15 and older are designated NLSY79 young adult members. (In 1998, young adults were not surveyed if they had reached age 21 by the interview date.) The 1998 survey gathered information about 4,924 children and 2,143 young adults, or 92.2 percent of the children and 70.2 percent of the young adults born to NLSY79 mothers who were interviewed.

This article first lists the various survey instruments administered in 1998 and describes differences from the 1996 questionnaire. It then discusses the young adult geocode version now being created and concludes with information on how to obtain these data and the accompanying documentation.

Interview content

The Children of the NLSY79 survey involved five different instruments. For children ages 14 and younger, two of these were administered to the NLSY79 mother: the mother supplement and sections of the child supplement. The first gathered the mother's responses to various child behavior and development scales, as well as details about the child's schooling and family background. The computer-administered child supplement asked the mother to provide information on the child's background, health, and schooling and included various child assessments. A paper self-administered supplement, covering attitudes and behaviors, was given to children ages 10 to 14. Children who would be at least 15 years old by the end of the survey year, but had not reached age 21, were given the computer-assisted young adult survey, an NLSY79-style interview that asked about their social, economic, and demographic characteristics. This group also completed the young adult self-report booklet, which inquired about a variety of attitudes and behaviors.

The most important distinction between the 1998 and previous data collections is that, in 1998, young adults who had reached age 21 by the survey date were not eligible for interview. Previous child and young adult surveys interviewed all children of NLSY79 mothers regardless of age. However, the

information collected in the 1998 survey was essentially the same as that gathered in 1996, with only a few minor question changes.

The child assessments, an integral part of this survey, remained unchanged except for one age range. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R) was administered only to children ages 4 to 5 and 10 to 11. All the other assessments given in 1998 followed the same pattern as the prior 1996 survey. Ages of children eligible for assessments in the various survey years are listed in chapter 4 of the *NLS Handbook*.

The other topic areas were not changed for this child survey. These included background, health, and schooling in the child supplement. As in 1996, the child self-administered supplement (ages 10 to 14) asked detailed questions concerning several areas: interaction with parents, school and activities, employment, religion, friendships and peers, substance use, dating and relationships, sex education, and computer use.

The young adult survey, using questions similar to those posed in 1996, asked about employment, education, health, family relationships, financial issues, military service, and attitudes, as well as other topics. The self-administered supplement for this group included questions about the youths' computer use, substance use, attitudes and expectations, sexual

education and experiences, criminal activities, home and family environment, and other topical areas.

Child and Young Adult CD-ROMs and documentation

Like the last data release in 1996, the 1998 Child and Young Adult CD-ROM contains data from all child and young adult surveys, all child assessment scores, and a set of constructed variables based on information from the NLSY79 mothers' longitudinal record. These maternal variables (attached to each child record) include information on maternal household composition, employment, pre- and postnatal care, family background, health, and child care. Data on the CD were collected in the 1979-98 surveys of the main NLSY79 cohort and in the special biennial surveys of the children begun in 1986. Due to space constraints, the mothers' complete records can no longer be included on the child and young adult CD. Individuals interested in linking other mother information with child information can extract female data from the main NLSY79 CD-ROM and merge it with data from the child disc using a statistical package.

After the release of the main child and young adult CD, a new geocode CD will be prepared for the young adults. This disc will contain detailed geographic data about the residences of

young adult respondents, and will be released only to researchers who complete a confidentiality agreement. This process follows the same basic guidelines as the NLSY79 main cohort geocode. Contact NLS User Services (see the back of this newsletter) for more information. The release date for this new geocode disc has not yet been determined; availability will be announced in a future issue of *NLS News*.

The child and young adult CD-ROM will be accompanied by a *Data Users Guide*, which provides information about the administration of the various survey instruments and assessments, and supplies important details concerning the data. Also available is a set of young adult appendixes with coding and variable creation information not contained in the codebook. A document entitled *The 1998 NLSY79 Child Assessments: Selected Tables* is currently available in paper form from NLS User Services. A number of documentation items also are available in electronic form on the NLSY79 Child Internet site at [**http://www.chrr.ohio-state.edu/nlsy79-childya/**](http://www.chrr.ohio-state.edu/nlsy79-childya/).

Researchers interested in purchasing the child and young adult data should contact NLS User Services.

NLSY97 Early Results Conference

In mid-November 1999, a "Conference of Early Results from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997 Cohort" was held at the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This 2-day conference involved the presentation of numerous papers that analyzed the round 1 NLSY97 data or compared its results to those of its predecessor, the NLSY79.

The early results conference divided the presentations into several topical areas. This article briefly describes the topics of each session; a list of the paper titles and authors is available on the NLS web site

(<http://stats.bls.gov/nlshome.htm>). The authors plan to release final versions of the conference papers over the next several months; interested users should watch future issues of the *NLS News* for information about public availability of the research. Citations for the final papers also will be added to the online NLS bibliography (<http://www.nlsbibliography.org>).

Employment of youths. In this session, papers on youth employment examined the initiation of 12- and 13-year-olds into the labor market, compared the employment of 15- and 16-year-olds in the NLSY97 and NLSY79 cohorts, and investigated the

employment experiences and migration patterns of rural youth and young adults.

These papers exploit the detailed job data gathered by the NLSY97 to examine early employment among youths. A number of surveys limit the collection of employment information to youths ages 16 and older. However, the NLSY97 asks all respondents about jobs held so that researchers can examine early labor market experiences. In the survey, respondents ages 14 and above are asked about all freelance and employee jobs held since the age of 14. Freelance jobs involve doing one or a few tasks without a specific "boss," like baby-sitting or mowing lawns, or working for oneself. In an employee job, the youth has an on-going relationship with a particular employer, such as working in a supermarket or restaurant. Twelve- and thirteen-year-old respondents are asked about jobs held since the age of 12; the data show that these youths mainly hold freelance jobs.

Educational plans and preparation. Turning to education, two papers examined the impact of family characteristics and parental involvement on the youth's time use and achievement; the remaining research focused on the diminishing effect of family income and wealth on plans to attend college. The detailed data gathered on schooling, described elsewhere in this newsletter, permit researchers to explore a variety of topics

related to educational experiences and outcomes. In addition, round 1 includes questions regarding a respondent's expectations for his or her future educational attainment.

Delinquency and antisocial behaviors. The round 1 NLSY97 survey included the collection of a large amount of information on the respondent's participation in a variety of antisocial behaviors, including criminal and delinquent activities, smoking, drinking, and drug use. Combining these data, gathered mainly in the self-administered section of the survey, with other information about the respondent, research in this session focused on correlates of delinquent and criminal behavior among adolescents. The scope of the data in the NLSY97 permits consideration of a range of possible correlates, including school quality, work experience, penalties for crime and substance use, family background, and geographic residence.

Social programs and youth. With recent reforms of the welfare system, there is a growing research interest in the efficacy of various public assistance and government social programs. In round 1, the NLSY97 gathered information about participation in various social programs from the youth and his or her responding parent.

Taking advantage of these data, research in this session examined topics such as the long-term benefits of Head Start,

participation in school-to-work transition programs, and the relationship between food stamp participation and health. The program participation data, coupled with the detailed information on household income and assets collected from both youths and responding parents, also permitted an analysis of how poverty can be measured using survey data.

Race differences in youth behaviors. Because the NLSY97 contains an oversample of black and Hispanic respondents, researchers are able to focus on race and ethnic differences with regard to many of the topics described elsewhere in this article. At the early results conference, research of this type examined the origins and impacts of racial and ethnic differences in areas as diverse as expectations about educational attainment and childbearing, sexual activity, youth employment, and schooling outcomes.

Family influences on youth. Many researchers are interested in examining the role that the family plays in determining youth outcomes, both positive and negative. Because the NLSY97 collects information regarding the youths' relationships with their parents, contact with absent parents, and household structure, in addition to the data on topics like education and employment, researchers can examine how youths might be influenced by family situations and behaviors. Further, the

presence of a parent interview for most youth respondents permits comparisons of the reports of parents and teens.

Papers presented in this session used the family background data in the NLSY97 to assess the impact of the family on outcomes such as employment, grades in school, substance use, sexual activity, and participation in delinquent and criminal activity. Researchers also compared parent and youth expectations regarding future adverse outcomes.

Sexual and fertility behavior by youths. The NLSY97 survey collects detailed information on fertility from all respondents with children, including data on the characteristics of the child's other parent. In addition, the self-administered section of the survey asks respondents who are at least 14 years old a series of questions about their sexual experiences, including use of contraceptives. These detailed data on fertility and sexual activity coupled with information on the respondents' family background, education, and employment experiences allowed researchers in this section to examine possible causes and consequences of childbearing, dating, and sexual activity.

Data quality and comparisons. The wide range of information available in the NLSY97 permits comparisons with other national statistics and the analysis of data quality. For example, two conference papers compared NLSY97 data to information from the

Current Population Survey. In addition, the NLSY97 survey contains a number of questions similar to those asked of previous NLS cohorts, allowing researchers to analyze cross-generational similarities and differences on a variety of topics. Finally, because the round 1 NLSY97 survey included both a youth and parent interview for many respondents, researchers have the opportunity to compare data collected from different members of the household.

The NLSY97 early results conference was jointly sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Joint Center for Poverty Research. Additional funding was provided by The Ford Foundation, the Foundation for Child Development, the W.T. Grant Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, The Spencer Foundation, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Core funding for the Joint Center for Poverty Research comes from the Assistant Secretary for Program Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Transfers of Time and Money: Mature and Young Women

Many baby boomers have the responsibility of taking care of elderly parents or in-laws, while others are providing money to support their elderly parents. Additionally, baby boomers are helping their children with education expenses, costs of weddings and new families, house purchases, child care, and so on. These transfers across generations are of increasing interest to researchers and government policymakers.

Recent surveys of the mature and young women NLS cohorts have included questions about transfers of time and money to a respondent's parents and children. This article first discusses questions about parental transfers, and then moves to information available about transfers to and from a respondent's children.

Parents and transfers

The 1993 survey of young women introduced a new section, entitled "Parents and Transfers"; similar questions were addressed to both the mature and young women's cohorts in 1997. This section was added to collect data on the financial impact aging parents have on their children and to record transfers respondents have received in the form of inheritances.

Respondents answered in-depth questions about parental health, marital status, income, housing, and transfers of time and money.

In both surveys, the parent and in-law questions referred to the mother and father identified by the respondent as the people who played the most important role in raising her and, if she is married, in raising her husband. The parents may be biological, step-, or adoptive parents.

The section began with biographical and health information about the respondent's parents and in-laws, living and deceased. Details were then collected about the parents' residence, including whether the parent lived in a nursing home, and the distance the parent lived from the respondent. In 1997, if one or more of the respondent's or her husband's parents lived in the same household as the respondent, the survey collected information about whether the parent(s) contributed to the running of the household. Respondents also provided information about the financial situation of their parents and in-laws by answering questions about parental income, the value of the parents' home (1993 young women only), and the net worth of the parents' assets. Residence and financial questions referred to the surviving parents of the respondent, as well as to her husband's parents; stepparents were included only when married to a biological parent.

In addition to this basic background information, the 1993 young women survey and the 1997 surveys collected extensive data about transfers of time and money to the respondent's living parents and parents-in-law. The respondent first reported transfers to her father and his current wife, whether that was the respondent's mother or another person. If the respondent's parents were not currently married, she next reported transfers to her mother and her current husband. This process was repeated for the respondent's husband's father and his wife and finally, if applicable, for the husband's mother and her husband. Transfers were not reported separately for a married couple; for example, money given to a father and his wife was reported as one amount.

In 1997, questions about time transfers asked about two types of assistance: help with personal care (defined in the survey as help with dressing, eating, cutting hair, or any other care involving the body) and help with household chores and errands (activities such as house cleaning, yard work, cooking, house repairs, car repairs, shopping, and trips to doctors). Respondents in both cohorts first reported whether they had spent any time in the past 12 months helping each parent or couple with personal care and stated how many hours over the past 12 months they had spent helping each parent. The same questions were repeated for time spent helping with household

chores or running errands. In the 1993 young women survey, the two types of time transfers were combined into one general help question.

Finally, respondents provided information about financial transfers to each parent or couple in the previous 12 months. Regarding loans, the first type of financial assistance, respondents in the 1997 surveys of both cohorts stated whether they had made any loans, the value of the loan, and whether they expected the amount to be repaid. Respondents then reported the total value of gifts given in the past 12 months, if the gifts had a total value of at least \$100. The last question about money transfers asked about the value of other financial support, such as paying bills or expenses without the expectation of being paid back. As with time transfers, the 1993 young women survey asked about all financial transfers in one question, rather than breaking them into separate categories.

In addition to questions about transfers of time and money to their parents, respondents in the 1993 young women survey answered similar questions about transfers of time and money from their parents and their husband's parents. This enables researchers to examine transfers in both directions.

For the first time, the 1997 transfers section asked respondents in both cohorts whether deceased parents had a will and the amount of the estate. If the estate was not divided

evenly among the surviving children, the respondent was asked to explain the reason.

In addition to the questions about transfers to parents, mature women who had a daughter in the young women cohort also provided information in 1997 about transfers of time and money received from each daughter and her spouse. This reciprocal collection of information allows researchers to compare mothers' responses about transfers received to the information provided by daughters about transfers given. Users can thus evaluate differences in perceptions about transfers and the quality of these data.

Table 1 provides basic information about the number of respondents in the universe for each major topic in the 1997 transfers section. These totals do not imply that all respondents answered every question on a given topic; they are shown to give researchers a general idea of the amount of data available.

Table 1. Universe information for the 1997 transfers section

Item	Mature women	Young women
Total respondents interviewed	2,608	3,049
Number of respondents:		
With at least one living parent (respondent's or husband's)	475	2,312
Providing time transfers to any parent	266	1,049
Providing financial transfers to any parent	201	1,083
Providing any type of transfer to any parent	324	1,521
Answering questions on estate of father and/or mother	2,147	1,672
With information available from special mother-daughter reciprocal collection	¹ 616	¹ 785

¹ The mature and young women samples are such that a number of mature women have more than one daughter in the young women cohort. In 1997, some mature women answered questions about as many as four daughters, so there is information reported by 616 mothers about transfers provided by 785 daughters.

Children and transfers

To capture complementary information about intergenerational transfers in the opposite direction, the 1999 survey asked both mature and young women about transfers involving the respondent's children. Included in the data collection were biological, step-, and adopted children of both the respondent and her husband. (The 1999 data are not yet available; the data release will be announced in a future edition of the *NLS News*.) This new section supplements the fertility data periodically collected since the 1960s, particularly from the young women. These data are described in the user's guides for both women's cohorts.

The 1999 transfers section initially collected demographic data, including gender, age or date of birth, highest grade completed, and relationship to the respondent for all children not residing in the household (these data are in the household record for children residing in the household). Residence questions for children outside the household asked about the distance each child lived from the respondent, whether the child owned his or her home, and the home's value.

The rest of the transfers questions referred only to children age 19 or older or children ages 14 to 18 who were married or had a child. If any of the respondent's children lived with her and met these universe requirements, a series of residence questions asked about the child's financial and time contributions to the household. If the respondent lived in her child's household, these questions asked her to report her financial and time contributions to the shared household. The respondent then answered questions about the assets and debts of each eligible child.

After collecting this preliminary information, the survey asked the respondent to report transfers of time and money to and from up to five children meeting the universe requirements described above. Included were separate questions regarding loans, gifts, and other financial assistance, as well as time transferred for child care, personal care, chores, and errands.

These questions were very similar to the parental series described above, although additional categories of time transfers were included. If the respondent had more than five children, additional information was collected about the remaining children as a group.

Respondents then provided information about their estates. If the respondent had a will, she first stated whether or not she would leave everything to her husband if she died before he did. She then stated whether any of her children would be the beneficiaries if her husband was not alive; if not, the respondent was asked to explain. If the estate would not be divided equally among the children, she was asked to give a reason.

The 1999 young women survey included a special set of questions for respondents who had a mother in the mature women cohort. These young women described transfers of time and money to and from their mothers and reported the amount of their mothers' assets and debts. Like the similar series of 1997 questions addressed to mature women with daughters in the young women cohort, this reciprocal collection of data provides researchers with an opportunity to assess the quality of the transfers data.

For more information

For additional details about the transfers questions, interested researchers should consult the *NLS of Mature Women User's Guide*, the *NLS of Young Women User's Guide*, or the *NLS Handbook*. These manuals also provide information about other data available regarding the respondents' parents and children. All of these documents, as well as the 1997 release of the mature and young women data, can be obtained from NLS User Services.

Schooling Questions in the NLSY97

This article focuses on schooling information in round 2 of the NLSY97. In round 1, the NLSY97 interviewed both sample youths and one of their parents. The responding parent answered questions about the educational history of the youth since 7th grade, and the youth respondent provided information about his or her current school. In round 2, however, a detailed questionnaire was administered only to the youth respondent. The shift led to changes to the schooling section in the round 2 youth interview. This article describes those changes, starting with the new structure of the questions and then discussing

differences in the actual information gathered. Round 2 data are not yet available to the public.

Changes in questionnaire structure

In round 1, respondents who had not yet attended college provided information only about their current or most recent school. The youth's information was therefore captured for one point in time, and the experience questions described in the school experience section of this article applied only to one middle or secondary school attended by the youth. The extensive questions about college attendance in the schooling section of the youth survey are similar in rounds 1 and 2 (only a handful of youths had attended college in round 1).

To complement the youth data, the round 1 parent questionnaire asked responding parents to provide detailed information about the youth's prior schooling experiences. Parents provided the names and addresses of each school attended since 7th grade, grades repeated or skipped, gaps in attendance of 1 month or more since 7th grade, classes taken during breaks since 9th grade, and special remedial or gifted classes taken since 9th grade.

In round 2, the schooling section of the youth questionnaire was redesigned. The section first referred to the

school (current or most recent) reported by the youth at the time of the last interview, and then collected information about all schools attended since the round 1 interview date. The names of these schools and the dates they were attended by the respondent are organized on the NEWSCHOOL roster (school names are not released to the public). After the roster was created, the survey proceeded to ask about the respondent's experiences at each high school or college.

The NEWSCHOOL roster is a new feature of the round 2 schooling section. The roster contains information about the dates of up to three periods of enrollment at each school and the level of school attended (elementary, middle/junior high, high school, college). Survey staff recommend that researchers use the roster items rather than the raw data items whenever possible; it is the best source for dates of enrollment and school level.

The roster is constructed so that the school reported at the last interview date is school #01. If the respondent denies ever attending this school, it is deleted and the first new school attended since the last interview becomes school #01. The roster also includes a variable indicating the round in which the school was first reported (that is, in round 1 or round 2); researchers should check this variable, rather than assuming that school #01 is the school reported during round 1.

Educational status and attainment

Information on NLSY97 respondents' educational experiences was collected in both rounds 1 and 2. The questions on this topic remained generally the same in both rounds. Respondents first answered a series of questions designed to determine their enrollment status. In round 2, respondents first confirmed or corrected their round 1 enrollment status before describing their status on the current interview date. In both surveys, those who were no longer attending a regular school were questioned about their reason for leaving and the date on which this separation occurred.

Regardless of enrollment status, all respondents were asked in both surveys whether they had ever been suspended from school and the grade level(s) at which this had occurred. For each grade, the surveys also asked the respondent to report the total number of days for which he or she had been suspended. The round 2 survey specifically asked about any suspensions during the period after the date of the last interview.

In round 2, respondents reported gaps in enrollment of 4 weeks or more, other than suspensions. These questions asked about gaps since the last interview and the reason for each gap, such as illness or summer vacation. (In round 1, gaps since 7th grade were reported by the responding parent.)

In round 1, respondents in the 12th grade or lower were also questioned about the number of days they were absent from school during the fall 1996 term. No similar questions were included in the round 2 interview.

After collecting enrollment information, the questionnaire asked respondents about their educational attainment. In both rounds 1 and 2, all respondents stated the highest grade level they had attended and the highest grade level completed. In round 2, data from round 1 were confirmed or corrected before information since the date of last interview was collected. If a respondent was enrolled in high school on the interview date, information was collected in both rounds on the date he or she expected to graduate from high school.

Round 1 respondents who were either enrolled in college, or who were not enrolled but reported their highest grade level attended as 8th grade or higher, were asked whether they had received a high school degree. In round 2, this question was addressed to respondents who listed their highest grade completed as 12th or higher. After establishing that a respondent had received a high school diploma, both surveys asked for the date on which the degree was received and the name of the high school from which the degree was earned. Both interviews asked respondents who reported earning a GED about the date on which it was earned and the State in which it was

conferred, as well as any training program used to earn the GED. If the respondent reported college enrollment, information was collected on the type of degree sought.

School experience

The NLSY97 surveys gathered detailed data about the respondent's experiences in high school and college. These questions were largely the same in rounds 1 and 2, except that, in round 1, information was collected about only one K-12 school and, in round 2, information was collected about all schools attended since the last interview (including the school reported in round 1 if the respondent had attended it since the round 1 interview date).

High school experiences. For respondents who reported attending the 9th grade or higher, data were collected on the course of study in high school and on the types of math, science, and other (such as computer programming, word processing, home economics) courses they took in the 7th through the 12th grades. In round 1, respondents also were asked whether each math and/or science course was an honors course.

Both rounds 1 and 2 questioned respondents who were enrolled in high school, or who were no longer enrolled but had attended 8th grade, about the overall marks they had received in

the 8th grade (for example, mostly As, about half As and Bs). Those who were enrolled in college or who were no longer enrolled in a regular school were surveyed on the overall marks they had received from the 9th to the 12th grades.

In addition, round 1 respondents enrolled in grades 12 or lower during the fall of 1996 were asked a series of questions about their experiences at school during the fall of 1996. These questions covered the number of times that they had had something of value stolen from them at school, that someone had threatened to hurt them, that they had gotten into a physical fight at school, or that they had been late for school without an excuse.

College experiences. Although relatively few respondents were enrolled in college during the first two rounds of the survey, a number of questions gathered information about college experiences. These questions will continue to be included in future interviews as more respondents attend college.

For each college attended, the respondent reported the total number of credits that he or she had earned at that college, as well as the number that he or she had earned from sources outside that college. The respondent then stated the type of diploma or degree sought and the total number of credits required for that degree. The surveys also asked whether each

school was public or private, the term system of the school, and the grading scale used to figure students' grade point average. In addition, the round 1 survey asked each respondent who reported college enrollment to state the total number of years that he or she had attended any 2-year colleges and any 4-year colleges and the total number of different colleges attended. If they had earned a degree by the round 2 survey date, respondents were asked for the type of degree (for example, associate, bachelor's, master's) and the month and year in which it was conferred.

After establishing the dates of each term attended, the surveys asked the respondent to state the number of credits taken and the number of credits earned during each term. Term-specific data were collected on the respondent's full- or part-time status, grade point average (GPA); primary and secondary major; and any remedial English, writing, or math classes the respondent may have taken.

Both rounds also collected financial information related to college attendance. For each term, respondents provided information on the cost of room and board and the amount of tuition and fees. In round 1, the tuition question asked about the amount paid by a full-time student, regardless of the respondent's enrollment status; respondents reported both in-state and out-of-state rates if they attended a publicly

supported institution. In round 2, the question asked for the amount of tuition actually paid by the youth. Finally, the respondent was questioned about source(s) and amounts of financial aid received during his or her tenure at each college, and the amount that he or she paid toward college expenses using earnings or savings.

Achievement tests

Achievement test information was collected during both rounds 1 and 2. In round 1, these questions were addressed to respondents who were enrolled in or who last attended the 9th grade or higher and to respondents with a GED or a high school diploma. The round 2 universe was limited to respondents who had attended 11th grade or higher.

In both rounds, the NLSY97 questioned these respondents about the SAT I and American College Test (ACT). For each test reported, the respondent stated the grade level(s) at which he or she took the test and the highest score received on each test (SAT I Verbal, SAT I Math, and ACT). In both rounds, respondents reported which Advanced Placement (AP) tests they had taken (for example, biology, history, economics); in round 1, they also stated the grade level(s) at which they took the tests and the highest score received.

School-based learning programs

Any respondent enrolled in a secondary school during the reference period was asked whether the school has a day on which adults come to talk about their jobs. In round 1, those who reported a highest grade attended of 9th through 12th grades were then asked about their participation in any school-based learning programs, such as apprenticeships or mentoring. In round 2, these questions were addressed to all respondents currently enrolled at any level.

Both surveys asked for the characteristics of the most recent program, including the type of program, the number of days or weeks spent at a work site, and the number of hours per day or week spent at the work site. If the respondent was paid for participating in the program, he or she was asked to give the rate of pay. Other questions include whether the respondent took any classes at the work site, and whether the employer wrote an evaluation of him or her.

For more information

Researchers interested in further details about the schooling data should consult the *NLSY97 User's Guide* and examine the questionnaires to review exact question wording and universe

information for variables of interest. The round 1 NLSY97 data and accompanying documentation products are available from NLS User Services; round 2 data and documentation will be available in the near future.

Frequently Asked Questions

NLS User Services encourages researchers to contact them with questions and problems they have encountered while accessing and using NLS data or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Some recently asked questions that may be of general interest to NLS users are listed below with their answers.

Q1: I would like information about the NLSY79 respondents prior to 1979. The user's guide mentions a 1978 screener interview; also, there are several questions in the 1979 interview that suggest data collection prior to that survey (such as, variable R02156., "Weeks Worked since Last Interview"). Are the data from these prior interviews available to the public?

A1: The only interview conducted with this cohort prior to 1979 was the household screener. This instrument was used to select

NLSY79-eligible individuals in sampled households. The basic data from the screener are available on the NLSY79 CD. Questions in the 1979 survey that referred to the period *since last interview* actually collected information for the period since January 1, 1978. The variable titles used the phrase *since last interview* rather than *since January 1, 1978* to maintain consistency in the titles between that first interview year and subsequent surveys.

The 1979 survey also included several questions about the respondent's family background, typically referencing the time when the youth was 14 years of age. These questions may provide some of the information you are looking for.

Q2: What does Job#1-5 signify in variable titles? Is it possible to match one of these with the CPS job?

A2: Data for up to five jobs (employers) are released per survey year; the jobs are numbered 1 through 5 from most recent to least recent for the period since the date of last interview. In 1979 and 1993-98, Job 1 is always the CPS job. In all other years, the CPS job is usually Job 1, but it may be Job 2 to 5. In these years, there is a variable for each job, called *INT Check - Is Job #x Same As Current Job* (such as R03377.), that

identifies whether it is the CPS job. For more information on the collection of employer information, refer to the *Jobs and Employers* section of the *NLSY79 User's Guide*.

Q3: I have a question about respondent school enrollment status during round 1 of the NLSY97. Two variables, "Currently Attending or Enrolled in School" (R00305.) and "KEY!ENROLLED Is R Currently Enrolled?" (R05368.), seem to indicate the same thing, but I found the numbers of yes and no responses for these questions to be different. Which variable should I use to determine enrollment status on the round 1 interview date?

A3: KEY!ENROLLED (R05368.) is a more accurate representation of the respondent's enrollment status. R00305. is an initial question within the survey during which the respondent reports his or her status. However, this question is followed by other, more detailed questions about issues such as summer vacation and plans to attend school in the next term that may affect enrollment status. KEY!ENROLLED is created from the final roster after all questions and clarifications are made. For more information about how enrollment status was determined in round 1, particularly for respondents interviewed during the summer, interested researchers should consult the *NLSY97 User's Guide*.

Q4: In the round 1 NLSY97, question R00329. records the type of school/curriculum. The response categories are "public," "Catholic," "private-nonreligious," and so forth. One of the response categories is "alternative" (obviously for alternative school). Can I find out what types of schools are included in this category—for example, does this grouping include charter schools?

A4: We asked the youth to look at a card with the six categories defined in question R00329. and to tell us which category best describes what type of school he or she attends. We did not influence or recode the answers to this question. Youths attending a charter school had to decide which of the listed categories they felt best described their school.

Are You Working With NLS Data?

If you are, we are interested in your work!

- Have you received funding to sponsor a project using NLS data?
- Are you working on a paper that uses NLS data?
- Have you published a recent paper using NLS data?

If you have received funding on a project, are working on a paper, or have published a recent paper that uses NLS data, please contact: User Services, Center for Human Resource Research, 921 Chatham Lane, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43221. Phone: (614) 442-7300; e-mail: usersvc@pewter.chrr.ohio-state.edu